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Bush calls China shift unexpected

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Washington — George Bush, the director of central intelligence, said yesterday the current political crisis in China—with a relative unknown installed as acting premier—came as a complete surprise to the United States.

He also said in a breakfast session with reporters that he hopes Washington will get information from former President Nixon's trip to China—a visit President Ford describes as that of a private citizen, having no foreign policy implications. Mr. Nixon is scheduled to leave Los Angeles today aboard a Chinese airliner.

In the political shakeup in Peking within a month of Premier Chou En-Lai's death, Hua Kuo-feng, the sixth of 12 vice premiers, was elevated to acting first minister in the face of general expectations that the post would go to the senior vice premier, Teng Hsiao-ping.

Mr. Teng, with Mr. Chou hospitalized, was Mr. Ford's host during the presidential visit to China in early December. He is not an apparent target of a campaign, evidently inspired by Chairman Mao Tse-tung, against "revisionists" trying to take the capitalist road.

"There was a major surprise factor in both those developments," Mr. Bush replied when asked whether American intelligence had foreseen the rise of Mr. Hua, once a young party official in Chairman Mao's native Hunan province, and the seeming downgrading of Mr. Teng, which appears to signify a new lurch to the left in China.

Mr. Bush, who was United States representative in Peking until the end of last year when he returned to take over the Central Intelligence Agency, said there was not a single diplomat in the Chinese capital, while he was there, who suggested a shakeup like this would come. Regarding the Nixon trip, Mr. Bush said the CIA had no plan to quiz the former President when he returns from China. He said Mr. Nixon may have some contact with the U.S. office in Peking.

"I hope we get the information from the trip," he said.

Asked what aim the Chinese may have had in inviting Mr. Nixon, apart from courtesy in view of the reopening of contacts in 1972, Mr. Bush said, "They visualize this as a major breakthrough." On the other hand, he said he did not know whether the Chinese regard Mr. Nixon as still an important figure in the United States.